

Proposed Reconstruction CSAH 22, Minnesota Forest Highway 22

Beltrami County, Minnesota

OPEN HOUSE

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

June 18, 2002

6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

MN DOT Northwest District Office

**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division
Sterling, Virginia**

In cooperation with:

**USDA Forest Service
Chippewa National Forest**

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Beltrami County Highway Department

BACKGROUND

The Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (FS), the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN DOT), and the Beltrami County Highway Department are developing alternatives for proposed roadway improvements along CSAH 22 in Beltrami County. Repairs are needed to improve the riding surface, upgrade the road to current standards, correct drainage and geometric deficiencies, improve driver safety, and provide for future transportation needs.

The proposed study area is along approximately 6.9 miles of CSAH 22 (MN PFH 52) between CSAH 27 and CSAH 39 in Beltrami County, Minnesota. The route passes through a predominately rural area within the boundaries of the Blackduck State Forest and the Chippewa National Forest. The existing gravel roadway averages 22 feet in width with substandard ditches and varying slopes. Located adjacent to the roadway is heavy vegetation and some wetland areas, and in one section the Twin Lakes. The current legal speed limit on the route is 55 mph; however, the actual speed is limited in some areas to approximately 30 mph due to the roadway geometry.

As part of the planning and analysis an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared to evaluate several alternatives for accomplishing this work with the least impact to the social, natural, and cultural environment. The Federal Highway Administration in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service will prepare the EA.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose is twofold. The first is to improve the overall condition of the roadway in order to make the road safer for the growing traffic volume, while minimizing impacts to the surrounding natural and cultural resources. The second is to upgrade the capacity of the roadway, so it can withstand heavier loads associated with current hauling levels, without diminishing the existing character of the roadway.

The current average daily traffic (ADT) on CSAH 22 is 180 vehicles per day; however, within the next 20 years, the ADT is projected to reach approximately 255 vehicles per day. The existing roadway does not meet current roadway design and safety standards, particularly at some of the roadway intersections and along curves. CSAH 22 is frequently utilized by logging trucks, school buses, and other large vehicles. This use is expected to increase in the future. In addition, the existing gravel roadway is in fair to poor condition resulting primarily from drainage problems throughout. These drainage problems have resulted in numerous potholes, a soft roadbed during and after rain events, evidence of rutting, and areas of ponding water.

The FHWA intends to explore alternatives for making improvements to CSAH 22 without diminishing the driver experience, the character of the roadway, or existing natural and cultural resources. After the alternatives have been fully evaluated and the public has had an opportunity to review and provide comment on the proposed action, the FHWA will issue a decision on how we intend to proceed.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public information meetings provide an opportunity for the FHWA, in cooperation with the FS, MN DOT, and Beltrami County Highway Department to present information to the general public while the various stages of the project development process are being undertaken. It also offers an opportunity for individuals, representatives of civic groups, public agencies, and governing bodies to offer comments, submit written material, and ask questions regarding the proposed project, as well as to become informed of the schedule for future events in the process.

Maps and other pertinent information are provided as displays at the meeting. Informal public information meetings are beneficial to both citizens and Government. They permit an exchange of ideas and information for the development of alternatives, identification of potential impacts and selection of preferred courses of action. Comments will assist the planners in addressing the community's concerns. The intent of this process is to develop a design, which meets the project needs, yet minimizes adverse environmental and community impacts.

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

1. No Action Alternative
2. Reconstruct Roadway to Type III Natural Preservation Route Standards
(ie. two 12' lanes with 4' shoulders)
3. Reconstruct Roadway to Type I Natural Preservation Route Standards
(ie. two 11' lanes with 2' shoulders)
4. Reconstruct Roadway to Modified Type III Natural Preservation Route Standards
(ie. two 12' lanes with 2' shoulders)
5. Others?

Shoulder Options For Each Alternative Listed Above

- a. Paved Shoulders
- b. Gravel Shoulders
- c. Aggregate Topsoil Shoulders
- d. Seeded Shoulders

TENTATIVE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

Public Information Meeting	June 18, 2002
Public Comment Period Ends	July 18, 2002
Prepare Biological Assessment	June – August, 2002
Complete Environmental Assessment (EA)	September 2002
Compile comments on EA, Public Meeting	October 2002
Begin Final Design	November 2002
Start Construction	Summer 2003

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

The improvements to CSAH 22 are being coordinated between the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U.S. Forest Service (FS), the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN DOT) and the Beltrami County Highway Department. Considerable work has yet to be accomplished before construction can begin on this project. The needs and comments of the local residents, neighboring communities, and interest groups are important considerations for this project. Please feel free to submit any concern or comment utilizing this form. We ask that you please submit your comments to the address provided below by **July 18, 2002**.

Name: _____

Address _____

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For further information, please contact: Ms. Brigitte A. Azran
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